

Thinking Organizers: Tools for Candidates to Organize and Record Their Thinking During Both Formative and Summative edTPA Experiences

Purpose: As teacher candidates undergo the edTPA assessment process, they can experience difficulty keeping track of the reasoning and thinking behind all of the decisions that they made during the process. These thinking organizers provide an avenue through which candidates can record their thoughts, reasoning, and evidence of practice throughout the edTPA process and then have easy access to that information when they are ready to write their commentaries.

This thinking organizer was adapted by Ohio State University from templates that were created by Elisa Palmer (edTPA coordinator, Illinois State University) to assist candidates with the organization of their thoughts prior to writing their official responses to the edTPA commentary prompts. These supports provide a table for each commentary question that the candidate fills in with his or her thoughts. The teacher candidate can then use that table to write his or her official response to that question.

Use of the thinking organizers is not limited to work on the summative edTPA portfolio. Instructors can use the tables in formative experiences leading up to the summative edTPA portfolio creation. For example, a course may have an assignment or clinical experience that requires reflections upon professional practice. The course instructor can utilize some of the thinking organizers and adapt them to the particular questions asked in that assignment or clinical reflection.

Overall, the thinking organizers are helpful in aiding teacher candidates in their documentation of their thinking and reasoning throughout the completion of their edTPA portfolio as well as providing a tool for creating and organizing responses in formative course work.

Thinking organizers are available for the following edTPA handbooks:

- Agriculture
- Business Education
- Early Childhood
- Elementary Education
- Elementary Literacy
- Elementary Mathematics
- English as an Additional Language
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Health Education
- K-12 Physical Education
- K-12 Performing Arts
- Middle Childhood English Language Arts
- Middle Childhood Mathematics
- Middle Childhood Science
- Middle Childhood Social Studies
- Secondary English-Language Arts
- Secondary History/Social Studies
- Secondary Mathematics
- Secondary Science
- Special Education
- Technology and Engineering Education
- Visual Arts
- World Languages

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Planning Commentary Thinking Organizers and Helpful Hints (English as an Additional Language)

Please note: The purpose of this thinking organizer is to help you gather and organize your thoughts in preparation for writing your planning commentary. You will still need to write your answers in paragraph form in the official edTPA planning commentary template. Feel free to add rows to any table as needed.

1. Central Focus

Describe the central focus and purpose of the language and content (subject matter) you will teach in the learning segment.

Sentence starters:

The central focus of this learning segment is ...

The purpose of the language and content I will teach is.....

I am teaching this content because...

b. Given the central focus, describe how the ELPD standards, content standards, and learning objectives within your learning segment address students' development of ELPD and content for each competency that applies:

- **Grammatical competence—the ability to use correct vocabulary and sentence structures**
- **Discourse competence—the ability to produce coherent and cohesive written or spoken discourse (e.g., paragraphs or conversations) that conforms to the norms of different genres (e.g., letter, essay, interview)**
- **Pragmatic competence—the ability to use language appropriately in communication based on the context and the relationship between the speaker and writer and the listener and reader**

- **Metalinguistic competence—knowledge of linguistic/grammatical concepts and functions, and the ability to use linguistic terminology to describe or discuss them**

Organize your response:

List the standard or learning objective	Which is it connected to: grammatical competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, metalinguistic competence?	How does it develop ELPD and content?

- c. **Explain how your plans build on each other and make connections between language competencies (listed above) and content to support students' English language development in two or more of the four modalities (speaking, listening, reading, writing).**

Organize your response:

Lesson Plan	Language Competencies	Content	Modality	How the lesson builds on and makes connections to support language development.

2. Knowledge of Student to Inform Teaching

For each of the prompts below (2a–b), describe what you know about your students with respect to the central focus of the learning segment.

Consider the variety of English language learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education [SLIFE], readers who struggle in their first language, students at varying levels of language proficiency, long-term ELLs, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

- a. **Prior academic learning and prerequisite skills related to the central focus—Cite evidence of what students know, what they can do, and what they are still learning to do.**

Organize your response. Delete any rows that may not apply:

Students	Related content already learned (What do they know?)	Related skills students already have (What can they do?)	What the students are learning to do related to the learning segment (What are they still learning to do?)
Students with IEPs			
Students with 504 plans			
Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)			
Struggling Readers			
Students at varying levels of language proficiency			
Long-term ELLs			
Underperforming students			
Gifted students			
Other groups of learners			

b. Personal/cultural/community assets related to the central focus— What do you know about your students’ everyday experiences, cultural and language backgrounds and practices, and interests?

Organize your response. Delete any rows that may not apply:

Students	Students’ everyday experiences related to the learning segment	Students’ cultural backgrounds related to the learning segment	Students’ practices related to the learning segment	Students’ interests related to the learning segment	Students’ community backgrounds related to the learning segment
Students with IEPs					
Students with 504 plans					
SLIFE					
Struggling Readers					
Students at varying levels of language proficiency					
Long-term ELLs					
Underperforming students					
Gifted students					
Other groups of learners					

Notes: Stay positive – discuss the learners’ assets

Keep the learning segment in mind – only discuss student assets related to the learning segment

3. Supporting Students’ English Language and Content Learning

Respond to prompts 3a–c below. To support your justifications, refer to the instructional materials and lesson plans

you have included as part of Planning Task 1. In addition, use principles from research and/or theory relevant to ELL education to support your justifications.

- a. Justify how your understanding of your students’ prior academic learning and personal, cultural, or community assets (from prompts 2a–b above) guided your choice or adaptation of language tasks and materials when planning to provide English language development within content-based instruction. Be explicit about the connections between the language tasks and students’ prior academic learning, their assets, and research/theory.**

Organize your answer:

Chosen language task or material (or adaptation of either)	Associated student learning (response 2a) or asset (response 2b)	Why did you make this choice?	What research supports this choice?	How does the research support this choice?

- b. Justify how the demands of content guided your choice or adaptation of language tasks and materials when planning to provide English language development within content-based instruction.**

Organize your answer:

Demands of content	Adaptation of language tasks and/or materials	Justification for choice

- c. Describe and justify why your instructional strategies and planned supports are appropriate for the whole class, individuals, and/or groups of students with specific learning needs.**

Organize your answer:

Students	Description of instructional strategy and/or supports	Justification of why strategy or support is appropriate	How is this tied to the learning objectives in the learning segment?
Whole class			
Students with IEPs			
Students with 504 plans			

SLIFE			
Struggling Readers			
Students at varying levels of language proficiency			
Long-term ELLs			
Underperforming students			
Gifted students			
Other groups of learners			

4. Supporting English Language Development in the Content Areas

As you respond to prompts 4a–d, consider the range of students’ language assets and needs—what do students already know, what are they struggling with, and/or what is new to them?

- a. **Language Function.** Using information about your students’ language assets and needs, identify one language function essential for students to engage in the content-area learning within your central focus. Listed below are some sample language functions. You may choose one of these or another more appropriate for your learning segment.

Analyze	Argue	Categorize	Compare/contrast	Describe	Explain
Interpret	Persuade	Predict	Question	Retell	Summarize

Organize your response: (May add rows if needed to address the range of assets and needs.)

Chosen Function	How does the function relate to content-area learning and central focus?	What do students already know? (Consider the range of students' assets and needs)	What are they struggling with? (Consider the range of students' assets and needs)	What is new to them? (Consider the range of students' assets and needs)

b. Identify a key language task from your plans that provides students with opportunities to practice using the language function identified above. Identify the lesson in which the learning task occurs. (Give lesson day/number.)

Sentence starter: "The key learning task that gives student the opportunity to practice using the language function is _____. This task occurs on day _____ in lesson _____."

c. Additional Language Demands. Given the language function and learning task identified above, describe the following language demands (written or oral) associated with the content area students need to understand and/or use:

- Vocabulary and/or key phrases
- Plus at least one of the following:
 - Grammatical competence
 - Discourse competence
 - Pragmatic competence
 - Metalinguistic competence

Organize your response:

Language demand	Identify these demands	How will they demonstrate this?	What do students already know?	What are they struggling with or what is new?
Vocabulary and/or key phrases				
Key phrase				
Grammatical competence (vocabulary and structure)				
Pragmatic competence (appropriate use of communication strategies)				
Discourse competence (cohesion and coherence)				
Metalinguistic competence (language learning strategies)				

d. **Language Supports.** Refer to your lesson plans and instructional materials as needed in your response to the prompt.

- **Identify and describe the planned instructional supports (during and/or prior to the learning task) to help students understand, develop, and use the identified language demands (vocabulary and/or key phrases, function, grammatical competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence, or metalinguistic competence).**

Language demand	Language support planned	How does this language support help students use the language function?
Vocabulary and/or key phrases		
Language competency		

5. Monitoring Student Development of English Language and Content

In response to the prompts below, refer to the assessments you will submit as part of the materials for Task 1.

- a. **Describe how your planned formal and informal assessments will provide direct evidence of students' development of English language proficiency within content-based instruction throughout the learning segment.**

Organize your response:

Informal AND Formal Assessment Description	Where does it occur in the learning segment?	What learning objective(s) does this assessment address?	How will this assessment provide evidence of students' development of English language proficiency within content-based instruction?

- b. Explain how the design or adaptation of your planned assessments allows students with specific needs to demonstrate their development of English language proficiency within content-based instruction.

Consider the variety of English language learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education [SLIFE], readers who struggle in their first language, students at varying levels of language proficiency, long-term ELLs, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

Delete any rows that may not apply. Organize your response:

	Description of assessment or assessment adaptations	The students(s) for whom the assessment was designed or adapted	How does this assessment allow this student(s) to demonstrate his/her learning?
Class as a whole			
Students with IEPs			
Students with 504 plans			
SIFE			
Struggling Readers			
Students at varying levels of language proficiency			
Long-term ELLs			
Underperforming students			
Gifted students			
Other groups of learners			

Instruction Commentary Thinking Organizers and Helpful Hints (English as an Additional Language)

Please note: The purpose of this thinking organizer is to help you gather and organize your thoughts in preparation for writing your instruction commentary. You will still need to write your answers in paragraph form in the official edTPA instruction commentary template.

1. List the learning experience(s) you have selected for the 2 video clips you are submitting. Identify the learning experience(s) by plan day/number.

“The lesson shown in Clip 1 is Lesson _____ and the lesson shown in Clip 2 is Lesson _____.”

2. Promoting a Positive Learning Environment

a. How did you demonstrate mutual respect for, rapport with, and responsiveness to children with varied needs and backgrounds, and challenge children to engage in learning?

Organize your answer:

Characteristic of Positive Learning Environment	Video segment(s) with time stamps that demonstrates this characteristic	How does this clip demonstrate this characteristic?
Mutual respect for children		
Rapport with children		
Responsiveness to children’s needs		
Challenging children to engage in learning		

3. Engaging Students in Developing English Language Proficiency

- a. Explain how your instruction engaged students in developing English language proficiency within content-based instruction with a focus on two or more modalities (speaking, listening, reading, writing) and one or more competencies (grammatical, discourse, pragmatic, metalinguistic, strategic).

Organize your answer:

Student Action	Video segment(s) with time stamps	Modality	Competency

4. Deepening Students' English Language Proficiency during Instruction

- a. Explain how you elicited and built on student responses to promote thinking and develop students' English language proficiency in relation to one or more language competencies and modalities, within content-based instruction.

Organize your response

Evidence of eliciting responses from students related to...	Video clip (including time stamps)	Describe how you elicited responses in this clip	Describe how you built on students' responses	Language competencies/ modalities
Promoting thinking				
Developing student's English language proficiency				

b. Explain how your instruction promotes comparisons and connections between the content being taught and the students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, experiences, and prior academic knowledge.

Organize your response

Prior learning/ asset	Video segment (Including video # and time stamps)	Comparison and/or connection
Prior academic learning		
Cultural background		
Linguistic background		
Experiences		
Demands		

5. Analyzing Teaching

- a. **What changes would you make to your instruction—for the whole class and/or for students who need greater support or challenge—to better support student development of English language proficiency (e.g., missed opportunities)?**

Organize your response:

Students	Learning need seen in video	Video segment (Including video # and time stamps)	Proposed change in teaching practice
Class as a whole			
Students with IEPs			
Students with 504 plans			
SLIFE			
Struggling Readers			
Varying levels of ELP			
Long-term ELLs			
Underperforming students			

Gifted Students			
Other groups of learners			

b. Why do you think these changes would improve student development of English language proficiency? Support your explanation with evidence of student learning AND principles from theory and/or research relevant to ELL education.

Organize your response:

Proposed change in teaching practice	How would this change assist students with achieving the learning objective?	What research is this change based on?	How does this research support your proposed change?

Assessment Commentary Thinking Organizers and Helpful Hints (English as an Additional Language)

Please note: The purpose of this thinking organizer is to help you gather and organize your thoughts in preparation for writing your assessment commentary. You will still need to write your answers in paragraph form in the official edTPA assessment commentary template. The exception to this is your response to 1b.

1. Analyzing Students' Development of English Language Proficiency through Content-Based Instruction

a. Identify the specific learning objectives measured by the assessment you chose for analysis.

Organize your answer:

Learning Objective	Explain how is how this is measured in the assessment

b. Provide a graphic (table or chart) or narrative that summarizes student learning for your whole class. Be sure to summarize student learning for all evaluation criteria submitted in Assessment Task 3, Part D.

Create a table or graph that shows the student learning for the whole class

- c. Use evidence found in the 3 student work samples and the whole class summary to analyze the patterns of learning for the whole class and differences for groups or individual learners relative to their development of English language proficiency within content-based instruction. Provide translations of home language used in the work samples as needed to support your analysis.

Organize your answer:

Whole Class	What is the whole class doing well? (Evidence from the whole class summary above)		Is the pattern relative to conceptual understanding, and skills, or problem-solving strategies?	What did the whole class struggle with? (Evidence from the whole class summary above)	Is the pattern relative to conceptual understanding, and skills, or problem-solving strategies?
Learner	What is the learner doing well?	What is the learner struggling with?	Is the pattern relative to their development of English language proficiency?	Differences between the learner, the group the learner belongs to, and whole class	Evidence from student work samples
Learner 1					
Learner 2					
Learner 3					

d. If video or audio evidence of learning or a video or audio work sample occurs in a group context (e.g., discussion), provide the name of the clip and clearly describe how the scorer can identify the focus children (e.g., position, physical description) whose work is portrayed.

2. Feedback to Guide Further Learning

a. Identify the format in which you submitted your evidence of feedback for the 3 focus students. (Delete choices that do not apply.)

- Written directly on work samples or in separate documents that were provided to the focus students
- In audio files
- In video clips from Instruction Task 2 (provide a time-stamp reference) or in separate video clips

If a video or audio clip of feedback occurs in a group context (e.g., discussion), clearly describe how the scorer can identify the focus student (e.g., position, physical description) who is being given feedback.

b. Explain how feedback provided to the 3 focus students addresses their individual strengths and needs relative to their development of English language proficiency within content-based instruction.

Focus student	Description of feedback provided	Associated learning objective	How does the feedback focus on the students' strengths?	How does the feedback focus on the students' needs?
1				
2				
3				

c. Describe how you will support each focus student to understand and use this feedback to further their learning related to their development of English language proficiency within content-based instruction.

Focus student	Specific feedback given on strengths AND needs (refer to response in 2b.)	How you will support the student in understanding and using the feedback	How student will understand and use feedback for further learning to their current work
1			
2			
3			

3. Evidence of Language Understanding and Use

- a. Explain and provide concrete examples for the extent to which your students were able to use or struggled to use the**
- **selected language function,**
 - **vocabulary and/or key phrases, AND**
 - **grammatical, discourse, pragmatic, or metalinguistic competence**
- to develop content understandings.**

Organize your response:

Language demand	Evidence of use (be specific)	How does this evidence show the students using or struggling with the language demand to develop their content understanding?
Selected language function (write it in)		
Vocabulary		
Key phrase		
Grammatical competence (vocabulary and structure)		
Pragmatic competence (appropriate use of communication strategies)		
Discourse competence (cohesion and coherence)		
Metalinguistic competence (language learning strategies)		

4. Using Assessment to Inform Instruction

a. **Based on your analysis of student learning presented in prompts 1b–c, describe next steps for instruction to impact student learning:**

- **For the whole class**
- **For the 3 focus students and other individuals/groups with specific needs**

Consider the variety of English language learners in your class who may require different strategies/support (e.g., students with IEPs or 504 plans, Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal

Education [SLIFE], readers who struggle in their first language, students at varying levels of language proficiency, long-term ELLs, underperforming students or those with gaps in academic knowledge, and/or gifted students).

Students	Next steps for instruction
Whole class	
Focus student 1	
Focus student 2	
Focus student 3	
Individuals with specific needs	
Groups with specific needs	

b. Explain how these next steps follow from your analysis of student learning. Support your explanation with principles from theory and/or research relevant to ELL education.

Students	Next step for instruction	What learning need is this in response to?	Why did you choose this as your next step for instruction?	What research supports this instructional choice?	How does this research support this instructional choice?
Whole class					
Focus student 1					
Focus student 2					
Focus student 3					
Individuals with specific needs					
Groups with specific needs					